

I am opposed to HB 5447. This is an ill conceived bill that will have a detrimental effect on the availability and quality of special education for children with special needs regardless of their diagnosis or level of impairment. If our students could benefit from a one-size-fits-all education they would never be placed with a private program in the first place.

Please DO NOT support this bill as it will directly translate to the quality of the services provided, and will likely mean that we will not be able to afford to educate students who require more intensive services. The bill stipulates that this should not interfere with IEP provision but the bottom line is that there is no way that it won't. This bill effectively removes the "I" from IEP. There will be less private providers. There will be less viable placement options. There will be insufficient funding to implement an IEP with integrity and rigor.

In the long run, I believe that the state will spend more money when our students reach the age of 21 because they will be less skilled than if they had a quality program. That is certainly not something any of us would vision for our children.

Thank you for reading and please, please, fight for the right of all children—especially those with special needs—for years to come.

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